

**BELTRAMI  
C O U N T Y  
HISTORICAL  
S O C I E T Y**

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**TABLE TOP DISPLAY,  
A LOOK AT THE SYSTEM OF DESIGN**

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HONORS THESIS PROJECT  
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There is a system that applies to all problems relating to graphic communications and 3D design. This design system is practiced in all areas of design from print work to digital design to 3D design. Every project presents the same basic issues the designer must address to create the best design for the client. Following the steps in this system leads to the most efficient and effective design solution.

The first step is gathering information. To gather information, exhibit designers meet with the customer and learn about what they do, the product or products they produce or sell or the services they provide. Then the designers find out what the client needs and expects from the design, the message they want to send and the image they want to project. This message could be a new product promotion, branding and identification or disseminating information and educating their audience. Knowing who the audience is helps the designer develop the most effective and appropriate design solution. The design must fit into certain parameters, and meet specific requirements for the client. Learning about the client, the client's needs for the project, who the client's audience is and the design parameters is crucial. Without any of these pieces of information, the design process does not move forward toward production.

I met with Wanda Hoyum, the director of the Beltrami County Historical Society, to discuss the possibility of creating a table-top display for BCHS to use in presentations for area businesses and schools for the purpose of educating the audience about the history of Beltrami County. The Beltrami County Historical Society is a non-profit organization in Bemidji committed to collection, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Beltrami County. There are 11 sites in Beltrami County that are listed on the National Historic Registry, the depot building, where the Beltrami County History Center is located, is one of them. The Depot building houses a public research room and archives photographs, manuscripts, maps, letters, textiles, shoes, etc. The city of Bemidji owns the narrow building, which holds 7,000 square feet of museum space.

The display needs to be transported by car and presented by one person. The display supports the presentation, without replacing it. Most of the presentations the Beltrami



County Historical Society gives take place in large rooms with several people in the audience and are done for either school children or business people. The presentations educate audience members about the Historical Society, the Beltrami County History Center, where the Historical Society holds office along with the museum, and the history of the area. Exhibits in the museum are on display for three or four years at a time, and are always of local interest and importance. Ms. Hoyum required the display to be historic and permanent, yet up to date with current information on the existing temporary exhibit. However, the Historical Society is unable to replace the display every few years when a new exhibition is installed in the History Center.

Currently, the museum houses an exhibit entitled "In Times of War, Voices and Visions of Beltrami County." The exhibit includes letters written by soldiers from Beltrami County to their friends and loved ones while they were away at war. There are also artifacts including photographs, general issue mess kits, and uniforms worn during the wars. Staff, volunteers, and Bemidji State University interns pulled together appropriate items and researched Civil War to Vietnam, in times of conflict and peace in Beltrami County to put the exhibit together.

After collecting all of the details, the process of designing begins. Based on the facts received and researched, the designer makes decisions about structure and layout, the materials to use, color schemes, and graphics that he or she believes best suits the design parameters.

I visited the History Center and met with Ms. Hoyum to get a feel of what she needed and an overall tone for the project. The walls inside the Depot curve and flow through the space, so I wanted to avoid sharp corners and flat display walls. I wanted to create a sophisticated, modern display with more presence than a tag board bi-fold table top display like you might see at an elementary school science fair. Using the Internet and an exhibit trade magazine as my main references, I began searching for modular and pre-fabricated table-top displays. I encountered all of the same flat-walled, sharp-cornered displays, or the run-of-the-mill single concave curved panel that I feel are outdated and



overdone. Giving the Beltrami County Historical Society a display that would stand out and leave a strong positive impression in the minds of its audiences was my goal. Coming up short in my initial investigation, I contacted several portable display manufacturers and requested product brochures and information to see if I could find a more interesting shape or modify a standard design to make the display more memorable.

Browsing through a CD-ROM from Nomadic Display, I discovered a table-top display system that had two curved panels, one convex and one concave. However, when I looked through the product brochure to find it, it was not there. I contacted the regional distributor for Nomadic Display, Mark Bendickson, and asked about the display and why it was shown in the portfolio of designs on the CD-ROM but not in the product brochure. He informed me that any of the curved displays are compatible with what is called a "bubble panel." A bubble panel is simply a panel that is roughly five inches wider than a standard panel for any of the curved panel displays. When the panel is hooked onto the framework at the usual distance for the standard panels, it is forced to bow out or "bubble" for the desired affect. Mr. Bendickson was very helpful in assisting me with appropriate display choices for my client based on size and budget constraints. He sent me product information sheets that included such information as floor plan and elevation drawings, dimensions, weight, suggested accessories and pricing information on several of Nomadic Display's portable table-top display kits. In general, these display panels are either made of a looped fabric onto which graphics are hung or comprised of photographic mural panels that hang next to each other to seamlessly form the entire graphic for the display. While having a fabric panel with interchangeable graphics would meet the challenge of updating the graphics when new exhibits are installed, graphic production is expensive and transportation can be cumbersome. Hanging the graphics on the display each time it is presented, making sure they are each aligned and positioned in exactly the right places to ensure a professional image and a strong impression, would require a great deal of extra time before and after each presentation. Photographic mural panels accommodate the bubble panel, which fulfills the interesting double curve design and eliminates a great deal of potential hassle from the display.



After meeting with Ms. Hoyum again to present the display options I found, we decided which display to order based on its size, portability, how easy it would be for one person to set up and take down, and the cost (see pages 10-11). Some of the displays were too wide for our needs, while others were too tall and for one person to comfortably present to a group of people. The Mars kit we agreed upon spans 5' 9" and stands only 3' 5 ¼" high, a very manageable size that will not dwarf a presenter when set up on top of a standard conference table.

I contacted Mr. Bendickson again on behalf of the Beltrami County Historical Society to request a discounted rate for the non-profit organization, and to inquire about graphic production and whom he suggested we employ. Together we agreed a thirty percent discount was reasonable for the display. He gave me the contact information for Theresa Kurth with Pictura, the company that he uses and is licensed to produce the graphic mural panels for the Nomadic Display portable kits. When I contacted Ms. Kurth, Mr. Bendickson had already contacted her to inform her of the project and that I would be calling. She explained the graphic panel production process to me. There would be four panels all together. The two main panels would be notched one and a quarter quad high classic panels, one twenty-nine and seven-sixteenths inches wide by thirty-eight and one quarter inches tall and one five inches wider for the bubble panel (see page 12). There would also be two one and a quarter quad high small round end caps at fifteen inches wide by thirty-eight and one quarter inches tall (see page 13). Creating the graphics to the proper specifications was my responsibility and Pictura required them in ".eps" format (encapsulated postscript) for the highest quality reproduction. Negotiating with Ms. Kurth, we settled on a fifty- percent discount for producing the graphic panels.

In order for the graphics to be crisp, non-rastorized and free of pixilation, they need to be created at least the same size as they will be produced. Electronic images can be scaled down, but they will distort and lose quality when enlarged. Taking information Ms. Hoyum had given me in some of our preliminary discussions, I set to work on the graphic panels. To give the display the permanence we wanted, one of the panels is designated for the Beltrami County Historical Society as a whole with a brief description and some



information incorporating the Historical Society logo for branding purposes. The other panel holds the information regarding the current exhibition in the Beltrami County History Center with appropriate graphics. Because the budget is tight for the BCHS, the goal is to make the current panel interchangeable while keeping a seamless transition with the permanent panel each time the exhibit is replaced. Choosing colors from the BCHS logo and colors that I saw prominent at the History Center I filled the entire background across all four panels with a deep rusty orange, which is a warm, historic color. Using the bubble panel for the permanent panel, the Beltrami County Historical Society logo and mission statement made the perfect combination of graphic and text situated on the left side of the panel on the left side of the display to introduce the presentation. On the current panel to the right I chose another prominent color from the "In Times of War, Voices and Visions of Beltrami County" exhibit, a dark rich green, to frame a vintage photograph of soldiers from Beltrami County during WWI. I chose this image because it is the first image viewed by a visitor as he/she enters the History Center. The image of the soldiers also best encapsulates the entire exhibit.

Since this design was essentially "complete" I presented it as a proposal to the client. I explained my choice of the panel system with the bubble panel because of the curving walls of the museum space and the convex wall visitors encounter when they first enter the exhibit. Showing Ms. Hoyum how the panels seem to appear as one graphic mural with the background all the same color, I explained how easy it would be for her to have a new panel designed and produced when a new exhibit is installed in the museum. This feature fulfilled the requirement of keeping the display current without having to replace the entire thing every few years. The size of the display system is definitely manageable for one person. The case it fits into easily fits into the backseat or trunk of a standard size car for transporting to presentations. Weighing around fifteen pounds, the display is simple to carry and set up. With the discounts I negotiated, the entire display fit well into the budget with which Ms. Hoyum was working. I justified my choice of orange and green for the color scheme based on the existing signage and graphics and wanting to stay consistent for identification purposes. This color scheme is very traditional and gives a strong representation of the Beltrami County Historical Society to its audiences.



Utilizing the mission statement with the logo on the permanent panel gave the most overall view and purpose accomplishing the permanence we were striving for. While I did not actually have the photograph to incorporate into the graphics, I explained that I wanted to use the image of the soldiers from the entrance wall of the museum. It is the most powerful image in the entire exhibit and evokes strong emotions from its viewers.

After presenting the initial design proposal to the client, I was asked to make a few revisions. Ms. Hoyum did not care for the choice of orange as the background color based on personal preferences and the feeling it gave her when she looked at it. She suggested an olive drab type color more consistent with some of the other literature and graphic pieces she had for the museum. This new color choice she felt was reminiscent of the military uniforms and gave a more historic impression to the display. The green frame around the vintage photograph of the soldiers was something from the original proposal that the client did like and wanted to keep in the new revisions. Using the mission statement and logo on the first panel also appealed to her. However, she wanted more imagery on the first panel, instead of strictly a solid color with some text over it. We discussed in our early meetings a style of graphics that blended photographs together and had a tone on tone look and sophistication. She gave me some images that were used in some of the other literature and newsletters over the years. She mentioned that she would like to see more of the train and depot images and themes incorporated somehow since the railway was such an integral building block of the development of Beltrami County and because the Historical Society and the History Center are located in the old depot.

Sifting through the photographs and images I was given, I found the photograph of the soldiers and cropped it to fit within the border of the current panel of the display. To incorporate more imagery and some of the railroad themes into the permanent panel, I used Adobe PhotoShop to blend together two vintage photographs, one of a train coming into the Bemidji Depot and one of the Bemidji Depot building itself. Changing the background color to the brownish olive drab color was great solution for achieving the historic presence, and using a sepia tone on the vintage photographs enhanced the effect. Using the same type style for the title on the current panel, "In Times of War, Voices and



Visions of Beltrami County,” as all of the signage and literature about the exhibit strengthens the identity and gives the display cohesiveness with the exhibit itself. Pleased with the revisions, I presented the new design to the client. Ms. Hoyum was delighted with the new design as well, so the revision and presentation cycle was over for this design.

With the display kit ordered and the graphic panels in production, I had to wait until the packages were delivered before I could present the finished product to the client. As an act of customer service, I had the packages delivered to my address, so I could make sure everything was present and accounted for, before taking the display to the Historical Society. When it arrived I set up a morning meeting with Ms. Hoyum to unveil the finished display and to walk her through setting it up. Together we read the instructions and put the table top together. The process was simple, easy for one person to manage. The framework for the display collapses like an accordion, and when it is pulled open, it locks into place without clasps or devices of any kind. Then bars with magnetic strips that hold the graphic panels snap onto pegs at five locations, one on the back corner of each side, the front corners, and one in the middle. Each bar has two separate magnet strips for the graphic panels to cling to, one magnet for each adjacent panel. Having two magnets on each of the strips makes them compatible in any of the five locations, which makes eliminates hassle in the set-up process. The graphic panels are notched on the top and hook into place at the top of the strips before they are held in place by the magnets. The bubble panel is “hinged” at the magnets to allow the panel to fold and bulge without damaging the graphic. The set-up went smoothly, but just to make sure Ms. Hoyum understood exactly how to do it, I walked her through setting it up a couple of times and answered any questions she had. When we were both satisfied and comfortable with the set-up process, taking it down, and packing it up to put away, I left her office and told her to call me if she ever needed any more help with it or had any more questions.

This project taught me a lot and gave me some valuable experience working directly with a client on a proposal that was actually produced. Using the skills I have learned in school was extremely rewarding. Until this point, I had never dealt directly with the



client. Most of my designs in school, while following the same system, had no actual client. I was the client in most cases, and I never had to revise a design for someone else's preferences. It was great practice interpreting what someone else expresses as their goals and turning them into a design solution. In addition to gaining experience with clients, I also encountered vendor contact. As a designer I contacted vendors and procured product pricing and discount information for my client. The professionalism that was required for this project was more than I previously needed for any class assignment. Although I was nervous dealing with the client and the vendors at first, by the time the display was in our hands I felt very comfortable making arrangements and asking questions on behalf of the client to ensure everything was in place. The time management required for this project included more than just the final deadline. I also had to take into account shipping time and lead time for graphics production. This experience was valuable for me as a student. My client, Ms. Hoyum, was extremely excited and pleased through the entire process, making it easy for me to get excited about the design myself. Having something produced that was once only in my imagination and an image on a computer was exhilarating. Given the opportunity to design for an actual client, I highly recommend other students seek the opportunity for themselves as an invaluable learning tool.



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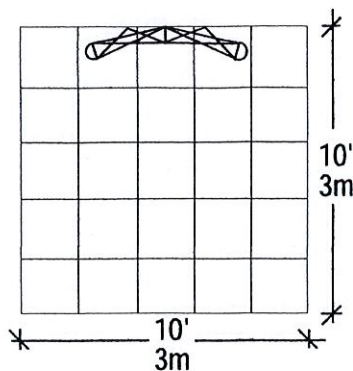
Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1999.



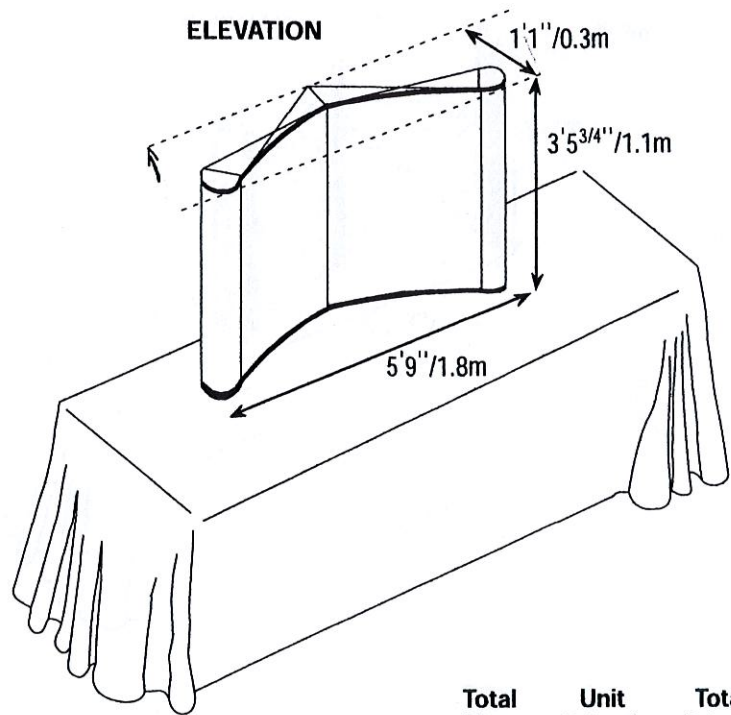
# Nomadic Instand®

## Mars #1

FLOOR PLAN



ELEVATION



Code	Qty.	Description	Total Lbs.	Unit Price \$	Total Price \$
C12	1	1x2 Classic Frame in a Nylon Bag	2.00	123	123
FEU11HSR	2	One and a Quarter Quad High Small Round Fabric End Cap	2.24	82	164
FPC11H	2	One and a Quarter Quad High Classic Fabric Panel	5.00	128	256
MSC11H	5	One and a Quarter Quad High Connected Strut	5.00	36	180
CCY14	1	14" / 0.35m Cylindrical Case	5.00	160	160
<b>CCY01F</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mars #1 Fabric System in Cylindrical Case</b>	<b>19.24</b>		<b>883</b>
CRE	1	RollEase Case	15.00	235	235
<b>CRE001F</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mars #1 Fabric System in RollEase Case</b>	<b>29.24</b>		<b>958</b>

### Suggested Accessories (Extra cases may be required)

LE	1	ElectroStrut	1.50	41	41
LFH-US	1	Premium Halogen Light for US	0.00	168	168

# Nomadic Display®

North America: Tel: 800/336-5019 703/866-9200 Fax: 703/866-1869

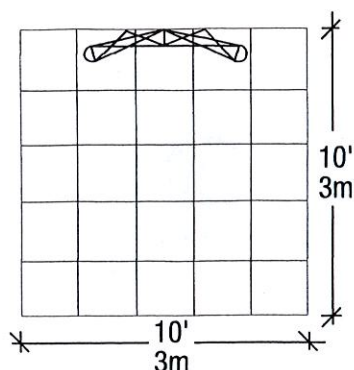
Europe: Tel: 353/98-66527, 66526, 66509 Fax: 353/98-66171



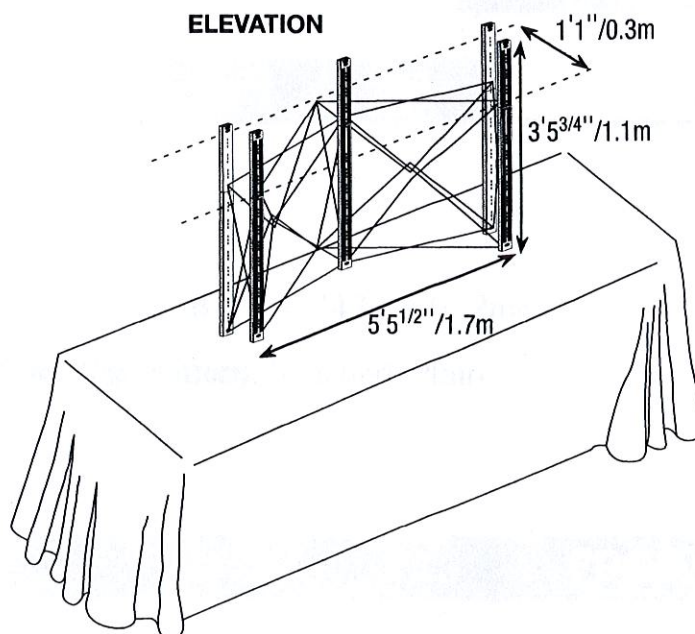
# Nomadic Instand®

## Mars #2

FLOOR PLAN



ELEVATION



Code	Qty.	Description	Total Lbs.	Unit Price \$	Total Price \$
C12	1	1x2 Classic Frame in a Nylon Bag	2.00	120	120
MSC11H	5	One and a Quarter Quad High Connected Strut	5.00	35	175
CCY14	1	14"/0.35m Cylindrical Case	5.00	140	140
<b>CCY01</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mars #2 Frame System in in Cylindrical Case</b>	<b>12.00</b>		<b>435</b>
CRE	1	RollEase Case	15.00	235	235
<b>CRE001</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mars #2 Frame System in a RollEase Case</b>	<b>22.00</b>		<b>530</b>

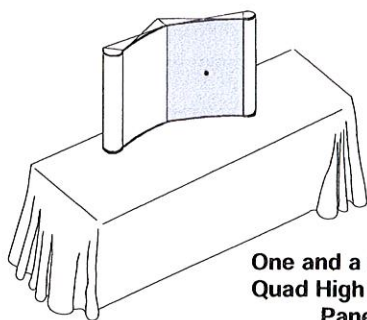
### Suggested Accessories (Extra cases may be required)

LFH-US	1	Premium Halogen Light for US	1.28	164	164
FPC11H	1	One and a Quarter Quad High Classic Fabric Panel	2.50	125	125
FEU11HSR	1	One and a Quarter Quad High Small Round Fabric End Cap	1.12	80	80
LE	1	ElectroStrut	1.50	40	40

# Nomadic Display®

Name

Equivalent Fabric Code



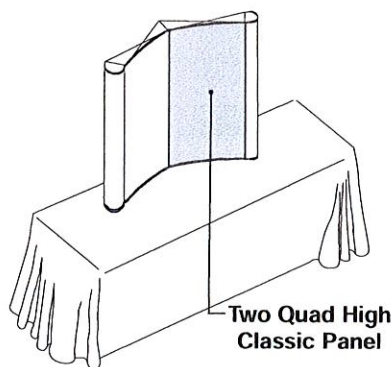
One and a Quarter  
Quad High Classic  
Panel

**Trim Size:**  $29^{7/16}{}_W \times 38^{1/4}{}_H / 747_W \times 972\text{mm}_H$

**Stiffener Punch (Top/Bottom):** Notched/Plain

### Two Quad High Classic Panel

**FPC2**



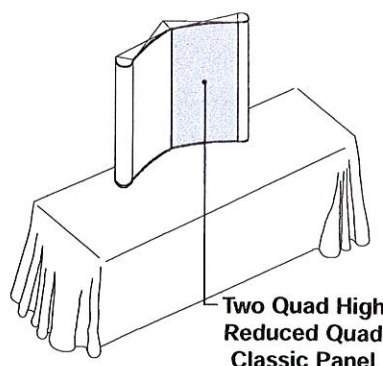
Two Quad High  
Classic Panel

**Trim Size:**  $29^{7/16}{}_W \times 59{}_H / 747_W \times 1500\text{mm}_H$

**Stiffener Punch (Top/Bottom):** Notched/Plain

### Two Quad High Reduced Quad Classic Panel

**FPC2R**



Two Quad High  
Reduced Quad  
Classic Panel

**Trim Size:**  $23^{7/32}{}_W \times 46^{11/32}{}_H / 590_W \times 1177\text{mm}_H$

**Stiffener Punch (Top/Bottom):** Notched/Plain

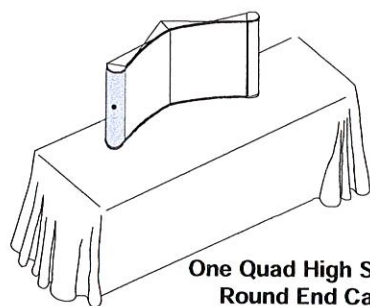


Name

Equivalent Fabric Code

## One Quad High Small Round End Cap

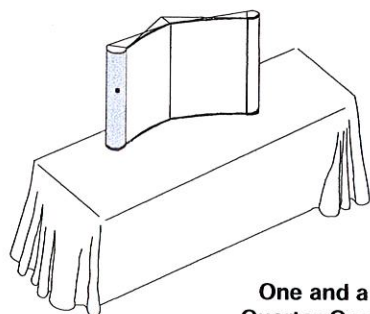
**FEU1SR**



One Quad High Small  
Round End Cap

**Trim Size:** 15" <sub>w</sub> x 28 <sup>3/16</sup>" <sub>H</sub> / 381<sub>w</sub> x 716mm<sub>H</sub>

**Stiffener Punch (Top/Bottom):** Notched/Plain



One and a  
Quarter Quad  
High Small  
Round End Cap

**Trim Size:** 15" <sub>w</sub> x 38 <sup>1/4</sup>" <sub>H</sub> / 381<sub>w</sub> x 972mm<sub>H</sub>

**Stiffener Punch (Top/Bottom):** Notched/Plain



BELTRAMI  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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*The Mission of  
the BCHS is to  
collect, preserve  
and disseminate  
knowledge about  
the history of  
Beltrami County.*

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IN TIMES OF WAR

*Voices & Visions*



OF BELTRAMI COUNTY